

Comments sought on widening Route 30

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MORRISON — After four years of research, Whiteside County developers and the Illinois Department of Transportation have completed a feasibility study on widening 24 miles of U.S. Route 30 between Fulton and Rock Falls.

A public information session is being held Wednesday at the Odell Community Center and Public Library in Morrison. There will be information about planning and designing the next phase, and about conducting an environmental impact study.

Morrison stands to be most affected by the project, which involves building a bypass around the town. Six possible routes are being considered.

"If you think you may be impacted by this project, then you really need to be there," said Betty Steinert, Whiteside County economic development director.

The U.S. Route 30 Corridor study was launched in spring 2003, to evaluate the feasibility of improving the road from Fulton to Rock Falls.

After analyzing the preliminary traffic reports, engineering data and public comments, it was determined that the road must be widened to meet growth and travel demands projected for the area.

Constant truck traffic rumbling through downtown Morrison is one of the reasons the expansion to four lanes and the bypass are needed. More than 12,000 vehicles pass through town daily, creating a safety concern and wearing out city streets.

"Mainly, we need it because of the safety and the traffic count. Also, it is supportive of economic development," Steinert said.

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Wegmeyer said construction crews will have to open up the older two lanes after repairs are complete for all traffic so workers can complete repaving and marking work on the westbound lanes.

Crews are also finishing pavement work on U.S. 20 for the IL-75

onramps, he said.

Future projects, which haven't received funding, intend to expand sections of U.S. 20 to four lanes from Freeport to Galena.

"It's always one of the projects we keep pushing," Wegmeyer said. "Hopefully, we'll be able to finish the next section to complete the entire bypass before too long."

To learn more

The Illinois Department of Transportation wants comments on the U.S. Route 30 expansion, which includes creating a bypass around Morrison.

An open house is 1 to 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Odell Community Center and Public Library, 307 S. Madison St., Morrison.

Folks can come and go, ask questions and provide comments.

For more information, call Betty Steinert at (815) 772-5175.